



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

July 6, 2005

# News Release

## **Iranian Sentenced for Attempted Exportation of Arms and Money Laundering**

**BALTIMORE, Maryland** - United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Allen F. Loucks announces that today U.S. District Court Judge Richard D. Bennett sentenced Abbas Tavakolian, age 58, of Tehran, Iran, to 57 months in prison followed by 2 years of supervised release in connection with this his guilty plea to attempted exportation of aircraft parts and components for F-4 and F-14 fighter aircraft, and money laundering.

According to the agreed statement of facts presented to the court on April 13, 2005 as part of the plea agreement, Tavakolian attempted to export munitions list items from the United States to the Republic of Iran, specifically, aircraft parts and components for F-4 and F-14 fighter aircraft, without first having obtained the necessary license for such exportation. On July 20, 2004, Tavakolian transferred about \$5,980 from Panama to the United States to acquire the aircraft parts.

Tavakolian contacted undercover agents by electronic mail and telephone conversations to acquire military use technology from the United States for use by the Iranian military. The Munitions List technology sought by Tavakolian included gunnery system components for F-4 and F-14 fighter aircraft. One such component was the M61A1 Vulcan six-barrel, rotary action, "inner drum" which was essential to feed ammunition into the multi-barrel 'gattling gun' of the offensive weapon system of the fighter aircraft. Tavakolian sought 100 of these "inner drums".

On June 2, 2004 Tavakolian met with undercover agents in Europe to obtain an "inner drum". On July 20, 2004 Tavakolian sent \$5, 980 via wire transfer as a down payment for the purchase of the "inner drums" and other embargoed or prohibited items. A second down payment of \$4,000 was wired and on September 16, 2004 an additional \$10,000 was sent to the undercover agents. Tavakolian subsequently agreed to meet undercover agents in the South Pacific and acquire the items for shipment to Tehran, Iran which cost approximately \$380,000. Tavakolian agreed to deliver 25% of the cost when he took delivery of the items.

On December 10, 2004 Tavakolian arrived in the South Pacific from Iran. He subsequently met with undercover agents and examined the "inner drum" and other Munitions List and prohibited items compiled at his request by the undercover agents. Satisfied that the items were in order, Tavakolian directed the agents to fill out shipment paperwork for DHL delivery services for the shipment of the items to Tehran. He also directed the agents to label the items as agricultural equipment in order to disguise the true nature of the items. Tavakolian then paid undercover agents \$100,000 in United States currency and compensated them for the DHL shipping costs. Tavakolian was present when a DHL representative took custody of the items. ICE agents subsequently intercepted and took custody of the items.

On December 11, 2004 Tavakolian was arrested and taken into federal custody after another meeting with undercover agents in which Tavakolian sought to acquire several complete F-14 fighter aircraft for future shipment to Iran.

This case was investigated by the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Baltimore City Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James G. Warwick.

**The information contained in this release was taken directly from a press release issued by the United States Attorney for the Northern District of Maryland.**

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*